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THE

SACRIFICE:

A

CLERGYMAN'S STORY.

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# THE SACRIFICE:

## A CLERGYMAN'S STORY.

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I HAD been nearly a year settled in the city of Z. before I became acquainted at the house of Deacon Daniel Cummings, although he was the very corner Stone of our outward temple, having built the Meeting House at his own entire expense, been chiefly instrumental in getting up revivals, by which our members were generally obtained, establishing Sabbath Schools, and rooting out of our councils every weed of heresy that dared show its head; or, in other words, in crushing with an iron heel, the monster LIBERALITY. And no man was ever better calculated to carry his points in all religious undertakings, than the good Deacon. In the first place, he was *very* wealthy. This gave great *solidity* to his opinions with the multitude. Secondly, he possessed a persevering zeal, which if not according to knowledge, was deprived, on that account, of none of its fervency. And this principle, set in motion by early prejudice, that great moving wheel in the grand structure of fanaticism, made him a very Sampson among the Philistines of Z. None could gainsay or resist him. If he said, 'let there be a revival,' there was a revival. If he said 'the Saybrook Platform is without fault or blemish,' where was the being rash enough to contradict him? Such was Deacon Cummings, and with my then views and feelings, he was to me, as to others, an object of wonder and admiration.

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I could hardly account to myself how I had resisted so many urgent solicitations, to visit his beautiful residence, which was only one mile from town. One reason I believe was, that being young in the ministry, it took up considerable of my time to prepare lectures suitable for the ears of a large and somewhat difficult audience. Another was, (though I was too proud to own it even to myself,) that Mr. Cummings was always accompanied to church by a couple of beautiful daughters, twins, and being no 'ladies' man' at all, as the phrase is, I heartily dreaded a tete-a-tete with these lovely girls, although one of them was a member of my church. But the Deacon became at length importunate, and would hear excuses no longer. I accordingly found myself one morning stepping very courageously into my Sulky for a drive to Three Hills, as the Deacon's residence was called, from the circumstance of three very singular hills, something, of the form of pyramids, shooting up within a short distance of the central building. It would puzzle any one to find either in nature or imagination, a lovelier spot than Three Hills. Its numerous buildings were arranged in such a manner as to give it, at a distance, the appearance of a little villa shut out from the commotions of a wicked world—a sweet Paradise for humble and pious hearts. I involuntarily checked my horse as we reached an eminence from whence I could enjoy an uninterrupted prospect, for I was then one of nature's most ardent worshippers.

The hills were nearly in the centre of a large and rather irregular plain, whose borders were skirted with a variety of handsome forest trees, which the woodsman had probably wanted heart

to destroy. The loftiest of these prominences was crowned with a clump of beautiful cedars, whose lofty tops seemed a resting place for the clouds. The second in height had nothing remarkable in its appearance, save a perpendicular ledge of blood-colored rock, whose dark cavities were nearly obscured by tendrils of the ivy and wild grape. But the last, and smallest, possessed some peculiarities upon which the eye could not fail of resting in sweet, though sorrowful contemplation. A narrow road communicating with the broad gravel walk which led to the mansion, and shaded each side with thrifty young locusts, wound round this little hill until it reached the summit and opened a small enclosure, containing two plain marble grave stones, and a white cottage, which stood, like Alciphron's love-bower and tomb, side by side. A short distance from this repository of the 'loved and lost,' were seen two large and flourishing trees, though of very different appearance. The one being a dense weeping willow, whose tearful branches waved silently above the sleepers; the other a lofty fir, with its dark arms, like the turrets of a watch-tower, flung aloft to the skies. An excellent device, thought I—a beautiful emblem of the sorrow which clings to the buried dust, and the hope which pointeth to heaven. A beautiful emblem of death and immortality. I could have lingered long upon this interesting scene, and the reflections it naturally suggested, but the Deacon had seen me with his spy-glass from the window, and was already opening the gate for my admittance. He expressed much pleasure at beholding me, and soon engrossed me so much in conversation, that I had hardly an opportunity of glancing at the beautiful

arbors, grottos and artificial fountains, with which the gardens through which we passed, were decorated.

I did not find the Miss Cummings half so formidable as I had anticipated. They were certainly very elegant and accomplished girls, but they were frank and social, and entirely free from that affected reserve which puts to flight the power as well as desire of intimate acquaintance. There was a striking similarity in the features and expression of their faces, as is usually the case with twins, but one three days visit convinced me that their minds were dissimilar. Harriet was one of earth's happiest creatures; all imagination, kindness and light-heartedness. Unaddicted to deep and conclusive thought, but with a well stored memory, and a heart o'erflowing with pure and gentle affections. Helen, the least handsome of the two, (I quote public opinion.) was by no means a being of sorrow, but possessing a quicker penetration than her sister, and taking a deep interest in the happiness of all around her, whether known or unknown, the various scenes of hopeless misery which came so frequently under her observation, had given to her pale sweet face, young as it was, a tinge of that tender melancholy which seldom fails to affect an amiable and sensitive heart. Yet was she not deficient in the more shining qualities of the mind. She was gifted with a calm and winning dignity of manner, which 'every eye followed with benisons,' and if she made fewer professions of attachment to her friends than many others, the strength of that attachment was never doubted by those that knew her. Such were the two sisters. The one resembling a wild cascade flinging out its light

and beauty in glad murmurs to the laughing sun, the other a subterranean stream casting up no boisterous waves, but hushing its low, sweet music in its own silver depths.

I spent a most delightful day at Three Hills, and it may easily be guessed that my *first* visit was not my *last*. No, I found too much congeniality of taste and sentiment to allow me to remain long a stranger or even casual visitor. I soon became a constant one. And do you wonder at this, dear reader? Now without inquiring into your right to be indulged in such equivocal curiosity, I will frankly confess that I was operated upon by two causes, in my visits at Three Hills. In the first place, I was not long in discovering that the favor and approbation of the good Deacon, was equivalent to that of the whole religious world of Z. Of course, his good will was a matter of some importance. Secondly, I learned in a much less period, that one look of kindness from Helen, the beautiful dark eyed Helen, was sufficient to create a world of itself in my heart. The feelings of that heart I had long neglected to analyze. And when the reckoning did come, I was astonished to find so small a thing so very complicated. Its motions even to me, its owner, were perfectly mysterious. I had at the age of twenty-one, that most susceptible season, been thrown in the way of two very fascinating women, one of whom was a fair-haired daughter of my own native state, the other a converted Jewess, who was beautiful and talented as the Rebecca of Ivanhoe, but I escaped unscathed.

I afterwards boarded three years in the same house with a West India heiress, whose immense

wealth was considered the very least of her attractions, and who condescended to treat me with marked deference. I was still heart whole. My friends added, 'heart-hardened.' And I almost concurred in their opinions, when after listening to the wild warbling of Harriet Cummings' voice at the piano, and drinking the light of her bewildering smile, I detected no answering tone among the harp-strings of feeling. But my hour came at last. The kneeling form of Helen at the hour of evening devotion, the tremulous earnestness of her dark blue eye,

As through its raised and moistened lids  
It sought the spirit throne,

Produced a sensation which convinced me the 'star of my heaven' was revealed, and like Zoroaster, I bowed in 'rapt admiration before it.

There is no denying it. Love is the universal talisman—the magician of all hearts. Its empire is human nature, and profession offers no bar to its despotic extravagancies.

The acknowledgement of my affection for that gentle and high minded girl, was more like the confession of a despairing criminal, than the suit of a trusting lover. It partook neither of hope or fear, for of these I had not thought. It was simply an involuntary and unreserved outpouring of my soul's warm admiration, a releasing of pent-up sympathies, of wild and dream-like thoughts. I asked, I expected nothing in return. But the generous being to whom I confided my heart's dearest secret, understood better the wishes of that heart. She spoke not of love, but she acknowledged sincere regard, and—and she consented to be mine. Oh the happy days of our betrothment! Bear with me, dear reader, if I

linger a moment in that sunniest spot of my existence—that one green isle 'mid the turbulent waters of a long and wearisome life. The lovely Helen little suspected the depth of my idolatry. I would not have had her for worlds; she would have shrunk from me in terror. She knew not that her sweet image continually hovered between me and heaven; that she was ever present to my mind in seasons of contemplation, and even prayer. She knew not that my increasing perseverance in pastoral duties was chiefly to gain favor in her sight, and that the overpowering eloquence which gained me such bursts of applause, was wrung from a heart more deeply consecrated to her, than to that Divine Master whose name so often trembled on my lips. Such was the mad worship of my love, and bitterly, bitterly was I punished for disobeying the first and great commandment.

Time passed on. Our sky was still unclouded. We strayed through the green fields of Three Hills with light and happy hearts. We lingered amid the melancholy beauties of the cottage graveyard. We bent together over the inspired pages of holy writ. We mingled our voices in the vesper hymn, and at the altar of family devotion. But the fall drew near, and Deacon Cummings thought it time to propose the renewal of a right spirit among the churches. The reader is sufficiently acquainted with the character of the Deacon, to anticipate the result. A revival was soon in operation in Z. and never did I know a greater excitement. Every visage suddenly underwent a longitudinal extension; every mind seemed depressed. All labor was suspended; the children were seen kneeling in

groups in the corners of the streets, and the aged and the middle aged collected in praying circles with countenances which seemed to forebode some impending calamity. And a calamity was impending. Harriet Cummings, unlike her sister, had ever resisted the influences of the holy spirit. Not that she could be called really irreligious. The doctrines of the blessed Redeemer, the ceremonies of his visible church, were sacred in her eyes, but, agreeable to her own admission, their beautifying principles were not, as with Helen, the streams from whence every thought, and word and action of her life issued. She had not 'given herself to God,' as the saying was in those days. She still loved the carnal allurements of the world better than the things of the kingdom. She loved gay company. She loved the Theatre, and was often known to prefer a tete-a-tete with some of Sir Walter Scott's heroines in her own little room, to the sober salutations of pious sisters at the house of prayer. The Deacon often remonstrated, and with harshness, as was his manner, but it affected her not. Helen entreated and prayed. We both of us prayed for her, and with her. Still it availed nothing. For though she listened with the utmost sweetness to all we said to her; nay, would sometimes even weep at the anxiety we manifested for her eternal welfare, she nevertheless continued the same happy child of nature, until the revival of which I have spoken, when a change suddenly became visible in her appearance.

A preacher from a great distance, by the name of —, conducted the meetings and he was the most powerful revivalist I ever knew. Harriet attended his meetings strictly. She soon became

thoughtful ; then melancholy ; and was at last, carried home in a state of insanity. Two days and nights did Helen and myself watch by her bedside, and dreadful were the ravings to which we were obliged to listen. On the third day towards evening, she became calm. She called us both to her. She spoke of her past life, as one of bitter rebellion ; one that deserved not forgiveness—‘ and,’ added she, ‘ it will never obtain forgiveness. Do not weep Helen. Have you not always said we should be resigned. I am resigned. I have seen the great Book of Fate, my sister. Thy name was written among the blessed few who are chosen to minister through a long eternity at the throne of the Almighty, while mine was on the dark and blotted list of the damned ! Yes, we shall be separated, Helen, but do not weep so sadly now—save your tears till the day of Judgment, when the mighty King shall frown me down to the pit. I can bear them then, for my heart will be harder. But now I must sleep. Leave me Helen, for my head is very heavy,’ and she clasped her hands across her swollen eyes. We left the room. Helen went below to her father, while I thought it more prudent to remain in an adjoining chamber. I listened some time at the door, but could hear nothing save an occasional half-breathed sigh, as of one in an uneasy slumber. I took a book and retired to a distant window. I had read through several pages, and quite forgotten my fears, when suddenly my ear was pierced by a low agonizing groan. To burst into the room, was but the work of an instant, but alas ! I was too late. That dreadful sound had been wrung out by the parting spirit. She had committed suicide ; how I cannot tell, for my senses even now, reel at the,

horrid recollection. To describe the feelings of the family at this shocking occurrence, would of course be impossible. An almost idolized daughter—a twin sister—the reader can imagine how the survivors were affected.

The funeral was held in the large hall of the Deacon's own house, which was filled to overflowing. The officiating clergyman was from a considerable distance, and though a stranger to me, I felt encouraged to hope, while gazing on his silver hairs, and time-dimmed eyes, that he had come prepared to speak peace to the broken hearted. I was mistaken. It was too good an opportunity for a dreadful warning, to be left unimproved. The harrowing circumstances of the poor girl's death, were minutely and callously detailed. Could he only have stopt here! But no! She had died a hardened, impenitent sinner, despising, and despised of God. She had died by her own hands, and thereby precluded even the possibility of salvation. And he quoted the oft repeated, though unscriptural text, 'No self murderer can enter into the kingdom of heaven.' [My very heart ached.] But even this was insufficient. He pronounced the final doom of the wrathful Judge upon the lost spirit. He described the parting scene on the confines of the two worlds—he pursued it to the very verge of its flaming, its eternal abode, and there——he was interrupted by a wild and piercing shriek, and the next moment Helen Cummings was carried senseless out of the room.

Oh how long, and in what agony did we hang o'er that pale and apparently lifeless victim. Our hopes waxed faint, and even the physician, (who was luckily in the house at the time,) began

to despair of restoring her, when suddenly, she astonished us all by springing like a frightened fawn from her bed. We were perfectly electrified. A single glance, however, at her distorted features unraveled the mystery. She was mad. Her beautiful dark eyes sparkled with all the frenzied fury of a maniac—the white froth bubbled on her lip, and her hands were both clenched in her soft brown tresses.

Weeks, long, long weeks, went by, and the dread disease abated not. I seldom saw her. I could not bear to behold her delicate form writhing under restraint, though necessarily imposed. I could not listen to her piteous supplications for her sister's soul. But I could stay near her, I could pray for her, and for myself; aye, and I did pray, as it were, without ceasing. Yet how impotent, how childish were those prayers! 'Let her but give signs of returning consciousness, let me but hear one word, see one look of dawning reason, 'tis all I ask.' This was the burden of my midnight orisons. Alas! so little do we know the wishes of our own hearts. The spell, (for spell it seemed,) was at length, contrary to all our expectations, broken. She was restored, Her lips played with their former sweet smile, her eye assumed its usual bland and beautiful expression. But she could not speak or even lift a finger, so completely was her strength wasted; and death seemed still to hover near her, unwilling to yield so fair a prize. The Physician ordered every room adjoining hers to be evacuated—every sound of labor to be suspended, for, said he, a word, even a breath may waft her hence. For three weeks not a human being, save himself and the nurse, were admitted. At the end

of that time, she was allowed to see her father, and afterwards, me. She wept like a little child when I entered the room, and I shame not to acknowledge, dear reader, that our tears were mingled together. She spoke of her long illness, but made no allusion to the cause. She also avoided every thing relating to her deceased sister of which I was glad, for I dreaded the probable consequences to herself.

‘Yes, Frederick,’ continued she, ‘I have been very, very sick, and nurse says I was hardly myself some of the time. I remember my head did feel strange, and I think I had some singular fancies. But I am so much better now. I have had a long time for reflection, Frederick, and though I have not been able to read, I have revolved in my mind many of the sweet and comforting sayings of our blessed book, and I hope it has bettered my heart. Oh! I shall rejoice, when I am again permitted to read and listen to its sublime instructions. And will you not read me a chapter now, Frederick?’ ‘Of course. Have you any choice?’ ‘None, excepting, I think I should prefer something in the *New Testament*.’ ‘Well, then, I will read wherever the book happens to open.’ The leaves parted at the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians. I read to the twenty-third verse, when she interrupted me with, ‘excuse me, Frederick, but you must have miscalled one word. You said, *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*. I presume it reads, “even so in Christ shall *many* be made alive.”’ ‘No, Helen, I read it right. It is ALL’ ‘Indeed!’ replied she musingly. ‘Well, read on, perhaps it is somewhere explained.’ ‘Is it not strange,’ said she, when I had finished and laid by

the book, 'is it not strange that I have no recollection of ever reading that chapter? It is entirely new, and I think very interesting too. Does it not contain some new doctrines? It speaks of a mystery that we shall all be changed after death. Do you suppose this possible?' 'Why, yes, Helen, we shall undoubtedly appear at the resurrection with bodies different from those we now possess.' 'But does this change regard only the outward form? It says we shall be made alive in Christ; that this corruptible shall put on incorruption; that Christ is to rule until he has put all enemies under his feet; and Death is called the last enemy, and that is to be swallowed up in victory. What can it all mean!' I did not inform her what it meant, for the simple reason that I did not happen to know myself; but I told her I presumed she could easily satisfy herself in relation to it, when she was sufficiently recovered to investigate abstruse subjects, and here the matter dropt.

I was soon after this, summoned home, (about, forty miles distant,) to see my father, whose demise was daily expected. He however recovered, though almost miraculously, and I was enabled to return in a couple of weeks, being much sooner than I anticipated. I found strange rumors afloat in Z. to which, as rumors, I at first gave little heed. The substance of them was, that Miss Cummings had become skeptical in regard to the main doctrines of the church, and that the matter was soon to be investigated in due form in council. I soon visited Three Hills. The Deacon, as was his custom, met me at the gate, but I saw at a glance, that all was not right. A settled gloom was on his brow partaking I

thought, however more of anger than sorrow. I hastened to inquire after the health of his daughter. The old man bit his lip. ‘Frederick Grey,’ said he sternly, ‘that perverse girl will be my undoing. She will bring these gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. I thought when our poor Harriet was taken away, that my cup of bitterness was drained; but it was nothing to this, Frederick, it was nothing to this.’ ‘and to what, pray, can you allude?’ asked I, in a faltering voice, for his manner alarmed me, ‘what can you possibly mean?’ ‘To what do I allude?’ And have you not heard, do you not know, that Helen, our pious, our sainted Helen, has become a rank Universalist?’ ‘A *Universalist*!’ ejaculated I, scarcely able to articulate the word, ‘God forbid—!’ ’tis impossible. She has never read their works; she has never heard one preach, or even seen one. How then can it be? ’Tis impossible—there is some mistake.’ ‘No, Frederick, ’tis too true, for though she does not plead guilty to the *name*, her sentiments are precisely theirs. She talks of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of the fullness of the Gentiles; of the whole world’s remembering and turning to the Lord. She is a believer in that most abhorrent doctrine. Alas! that I should live to know it.’ ‘And how, pray has this been brought about?’ ‘Ah! that is the mystery. She says that a better acquaintance with the character of the Divine Being, has convinced her of the unreasonableness of the doctrine of endless misery. And she draws arguments in support of her favorite theory, both from nature and Revelation; only think, Frederick, from *Revelation*! And it seems as if she must be leagued with the prince of the power of the air, for she

has, by the aptness of her woman's tongue, put to flight three of our most enlightened brethren. To you alone, do I look for hope. *You* have some influence. Save her if possible, from this dreadful infatuation, this suggestion of the devil, and thereby wipe off the foulest blot that ever darkened the name of Cummings.'

The unconscious subject of our colloquy met me at the parlor door, with one of her sweetest smiles. 'I have been hoping all this afternoon, said she, that you might get back in time to help me to admire this splendid sunset. Just so it looked yesterday, but there was nobody to enjoy it with me, for Papa is quite abstracted lately, and seems to be losing his taste for our quiet scenery.' 'And Miss Cummings is resuming hers.' 'Why, yes, I don't know but I am. The world certainly unfolds new beauties every day. The flowery fields look fairer, the sun brighter, and my heart feels light, and almost happy. For

'I cannot go where *Universal Love* not smiles around.'

'Helen,' I exclaimed, rather reproachfully, 'from recent circumstances I should think your feelings would be of a very different nature.' 'I perfectly understand you,' replied she, her soft eyes filling with tears, 'but I fear you do not me. When our dear Harriet died, I felt as if my very soul was halved. Oh! you know, Frederick, that my sorrow was greater than I could bear. But what added to the poignancy of that sorrow? Was it not the thought that our separation was eternal? That bitter cup, my brother, has been removed from me. The Lord hath shown me that we shall meet again in peace, when he shall gather together in one all things in Christ. And is it strange, that my poor heart should become buoyant at this

sudden transition from despair to hope?' 'Helen,' said I, deeply agitated, 'you are certainly tampering with your soul's salvation. You are clinging to a wild and dangerous heresy—you are fastening in your soul a doctrine which takes away every salutary restraint from society and loosens the darkest passions of the human heart.' 'Your accusations are very, very serious,' she replied, 'and they shall not remain unnoticed. You say I am tampering with my soul's salvation. And is it doing this to place myself unreservedly in the hands of my Saviour; to build my faith upon the immoveable Rock of ages? Is it a dangerous heresy to believe that the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, until he has done all his pleasure? That he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob? And that all the ends of the earth shall behold his salvation? Is it loosing the darkest passions of the human heart, to be convinced that the way of the transgressor is hard? That his punishment is certain and immediate? and that it is the *goodness*, and not the *badness* of God, which leadeth to repentance? Believe me, Frederick, you have greatly mistaken the nature of the sentiments you so cruelly impeach. For they not only correspond with the plainest declarations of scripture, but also with the holiest desires of the human heart. You bring this argument in support of Christianity, against Deism, that the Almighty has implanted in every heart an unconquerable thirst for immortality. Hence, if he is a God of goodness, that desire must be gratified. And may not this argument be extended? Has he not also implanted in every breast a desire for the immortality of others? Yea, for the happy immortality of the whole human race? And may we not on

the same grounds expect it? While I was a Partialist, (and I have been one many, alas, too many years,) I enjoyed many seasons of what I then thought devotional happiness. That happiness I now feel to have been but negative; a miserable exemption from the pangs of acute suffering; an occasional forgetting of the uncertainties of eternity, or a slight and scarce perceptible hope that the mercies of the Lord might at some far off period encircle the whole creation. Of how different a character is my present enjoyment. The scales have fallen from my eyes. I *know* that mine and the *world's* Redeemer liveth. That he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. I have found the golden thread of promise. I have traced it in all its beautiful windings back to the ocean from whence it emanated, even the shoreless ocean of Almighty love, and no more do I doubt the final restitution of all things, than I do the truth of my own existence.

Her father who had stood in the door, unperceived, during a great part of the conversation, now entered. His eye flashed fire. 'Helen,' said he, in a voice hoarse with conflicting emotions, 'Helen, you have pronounced your own doom, you have acknowledged yourself a —— a —— I will not pollute my lips with the ungodly name; but you have pronounced your final doom. Henceforth you are to me a stranger. Prepare to depart, for as I hope for mercy, this house shall no longer be contaminated by one, (child though she be,) professing such damnable heresy. You shall go, Helen—aye; and pennyless too, a beggar like the rest of that miserable and deluded denomination.' 'Father! father!' cried the trembling girl, flinging her arms wildly around his

neck, and bursting into tears, 'father, I would not leave you for worlds. Poor Harriet is gone, and who would be left to take care of you in your declining years? Who would nurse you in sickness? Who would love and comfort you like an only daughter? Oh! do not drive me from you. I will submit to any restriction. I will not be called a Universalist, if the name is so disagreeable; I will only be called a *Christian*. But I cannot, dear father, I am sure I cannot, leave you.' 'And will you give up your mad notions then?' inquired he, slightly relaxing his stern features at this strong evidence of filial attachment. 'Will you renounce the Christless doctrine of free salvation?' 'Never! father,' she answered, drawing hastily back, and pressing her hand to her heart, 'never will I do this! I cannot be a hypocrite! I cannot deny the Lord who bought me! If *these* are the conditions, then indeed *must* we part, though my heart should break in the struggle. *Father, I am ready for the SACRIFICE!*' 'Go, then, destroyer of my peace,' exclaimed he, 'go as soon as may be, but remember, that *the curse of an abused, and grey-haired father shall follow you to your grave.*' The old man left the room with measured steps, while Helen sank almost fainting to a seat.

For a long time all was hushed in silence.—Neither of us spake, and but for an occasional deep-drawn sigh, apparently wrung from an aching heart, I should have feared the wounded spirit had sought its native element—the skies. But the oil was poured upon the troubled waters, and they were calm. She arose and sought me at the window, where the rays of the full moon were dispelling the gloom of twilight. 'Frederick,'

said she, in a voice of tender melancholy, ‘there still remains one unsevered tie. It also must be broken, that I may be wedded alone to my Savior. Yet, may it not be rudely severed. Oh! Frederick, I could not live to hear a curse from *your* lips.’ ‘And I, Helen—I should die in pronouncing it. No, I cannot speak harshly to one so fondly loved, but I can pity you, and I do heartily. O! is there no hand to pluck you as a brand from the burning?—Will neither arguments or entreaties avail?—Must you sacrifice every thing—your home, your friends, your reputation, and even your immortal soul to this wretched fantasy?’—‘Frederick,’ murmured she in a voice, low, and sweet as an angel, and taking my hand between her own, ‘Frederick, do you see yon beauteous moon? Its beams are gentle and subduing. They visit like the sterile rock and fruitful field—they linger upon my hand as well as yours—*there* is no partiality. Such, dear brother, is the love of our Father above. It has no favorites—it is limitless as the blessed light of heaven. Like the sweet rains of spring, it falleth upon the just and upon the unjust, it encompasseth the whole earth. And call it not a fantasy, Frederick, that my heart should burn to proclaim that love. A flame is kindled on the altar of gratitude, it would flash out into the surrounding darkness, it would communicate a portion of its light and warmth to the spirits of others. Frederick, my resolution is taken, irrevocably taken. I will forsake all things for Christ. I may effect little, but if I succeed by divine grace in releasing one soul from the bondage of that fear which hath torment—in speaking peace to one error-stricken heart, I shall feel that I have not lived in vain. But pardon me, I would now speak of different things.

‘ Our vows are registered in heaven, but our hands can never be united on earth. Frederick, you are free ! Yet look not thus reproachfully on me. You cannot surely doubt the sincerity of my attachment. Oh ! you may doubt almost every thing, sooner than that. And now that we may never meet again this side of the grave, I will confess to you, what in its extent, no other circumstances should ever wring from me. My love for you has been pure, and deep, as the fountain of life itself. It reared its altar in the very temple of feeling ; it sent up its sacred fires through all seasons ; it mingled its glowing incense with every thought and hope of my being. Seldom, Oh ! Frederick Grey, seldom hath woman loved as I have loved. The sentiment is still strong at my heart. But stronger is the love of truth and a crucified Redeemer—WE MUST PART ! Yet do not quite forget me, Frederick. Let the beautiful seasons of our past happiness and communion sometimes be present with you. And may the Lord bless you and give you that peace which passeth understanding—FAREWELL !’ I could not speak—I could only press her hand in silence to my lips, for my heart was crushed, and my spring-day hopes, like the seared and withered leaves of winter, lay quivering at my feet. I did not see her again, for receiving the next day an invitation to settle in one of the western states, I immediately accepted it.

Nine years passed away, during which time I heard nothing from Helen Cummings, save that she had left her father, and that father had willed away her inheritance to a dissipated nephew. My own little history meanwhile was distinguished by nothing remarkable save a change of senti-

ment in regard to religion, and an installation as Pastor over a small but interesting Universalist society in lieu of a flourishing Presbyterian church. This change in my views of the Divine character was produced by a variety of causes, though I always believed the first good seed to have been sown by Helen Cummings. Business at length called me to the east, and as the city of Z. lay nearly in my route, I concluded to visit it, and exchange a friendly greeting with the friends of 'Auld lang Syne.' It was early one bright spring afternoon that I drew up my horse at the door of a small public house in the village of Sullivan, a little place 40 miles west of Z. and which I very well remembered as being some years before the Diocese of a brother clergyman, who wrote me soon after his removal there, that the inhabitants were below all hope of reformation, and that he was about leaving them in despair. This recollection would probably have carried me directly through the village, but I saw what I took to be a funeral procession forming a short distance ahead, and concluded to wait till it was past.—I found no one within, except a very old lady who sat at the parlor window, watching the people as they came out of the church door, she arose at my entrance and politely offered me a seat, which I accepted. I observed that her eyes were red with weeping, by which I naturally conjectured the deceased to have been a near relation. The procession soon came by. It consisted of several hundred very respectable looking persons, nearly half of whom were dressed in deep mourning. As the hearse passed, followed by several young woman whose forms were nearly shrouded by long black veils, the old lady buried her face in her hands and burst into a passionate flood of tears.

The deceased must have been very dear to you madam, I ventured to observe. ‘Oh yes,’ sobbed she ‘she was very, very dear to us all—dear as our own lives. Could you but have known her, sir, so beautiful, so learned, so pious! She came a stranger among us, eight or nine years ago. Oh! we were in a sad state then. Our minister who loved us not, had just left us.—We had neither meetings or schools. Our young men were intemperate and profane; our young women ignorant, idle and mischievous, and our children ran like so many little savages about the streets. But she came like a ministering spirit among us, and the aspect of things changed. She told us of the dear love of our Father in heaven, and her words were sweet as the manna in the wilderness. She taught a day-school and a Sabbath school. She encouraged reading meetings, until heaven should send us a good minister, and she planned sewing and other societies for the improvement of our young ladies. We were soon a changed people. Every body loved the young School-mistress for her sweet face, and mild and affectionate disposition; and the interest she took in all our little affairs, made us anxious to please her in return. Idleness and intemperance rapidly decreased.—Our children became obedient and refined, and none of our young men were hardy enough to indulge any longer in the disgusting sin of profanity. But alas! she is gone, and never, *never* shall we look upon her like again. Yet does she speak to us—her last words are with us—they will never be forgotten. ‘Weep not for me, dear friends,’ said the departing angel, ‘weep not for me. I am only called a little before.—You will soon follow.

And we shall sing together the song of Moses and the Lamb in the dear presence of our "Father and our God."'

'And pray, madam, said I, deeply affected with her singular narrative, 'pray what was the name of this extraordinary young person?' 'IT WAS HELEN CUMMINGS.'

Scott, Julia H.  
(Kenny)



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